

AUTHORIZING THE POSTMASTER GENERAL TO PROVIDE FOR THE
USE IN FIRST- AND SECOND-CLASS POST OFFICES OF SPECIAL
CANCELING STAMPS OR POSTMARKING DIES IN ORDER TO
ENCOURAGE VOTING IN GENERAL ELECTIONS

JUNE 27, 1952.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State
of the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. KARSTEN of Missouri, from the Committee on Post Office and
Civil Service, submitted the following

REPORT

[To accompany H. R. 7871]

The Committee on Post Office and Civil Service, to whom was referred the bill (H. R. 7871) to authorize the Postmaster General to grant permission for the use in first- and second-class post offices of special canceling stamps or postmarking dies in order to encourage voting in general elections, having considered the same, report favorably thereon with amendments and recommend that the bill as amended do pass.

The amendments are as follows: (1) Strike out all after the enacting clause of the introduced bill and insert in lieu thereof a substitute bill which appears in the reported bill in italic type.

(2) Amend the title so as to read:

A bill to authorize the Postmaster General to provide for the use in first- and second-class post offices of special canceling stamps or postmarking dies in order to encourage voting in general elections.

PURPOSE OF THE AMENDMENTS

The purpose of the first amendment is to strike out all after the enacting clause of the bill as introduced and insert language as agreed to by the committee. The effect of this language is as shown in the statement which follows.

The purpose of the second amendment is to bring the title of the bill in conformity with the language of the bill as agreed to by the committee.

STATEMENT

This legislation will authorize the Postmaster General, for a period of 60 days before each general election, to provide for the use in all first- and second-class post offices of special canceling stamps or postmarking dies bearing a legend designed to remind citizens of the coming general election and urge them to vote in such general election. The selection of the words to be used is left to the discretion of the Postmaster General.

At June 30, 1951, there were 2,732 first-class post offices and 5,905 second-class post offices.

The present law authorizes the Postmaster General to permit the use for not over 6 months of a special canceling stamp or postmarking die for advertising purposes, at the expense of the permittee, where the event to be advertised is (a) one for which Congress has made an appropriation or (b) of general public interest and importance, is to endure for a definite time and is not for private profit. No specific provision is made for use at Government expense of a special stamp or die urging citizens to vote.

As introduced, H. R. 7871 authorized the Postmaster General to permit the use for not over 6 months of a special canceling stamp or postmarking die for advertising purposes, at the expense of the permittee, where the purpose of such special canceling stamp or postmarking die is to urge citizens to register and vote in general elections.

Hearings were held on this legislation at which representatives of veterans' organizations testified in favor of the legislation and a representative of the Post Office Department discussed the methods which would be used by the Department to put the legislation into effect. The Postmaster General has estimated that the cost of this legislation will be \$175,650.80.

The reports of the Post Office Department and the Bureau of the Budget on H. R. 7871 follow:

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT,
OFFICE OF THE POSTMASTER GENERAL,
Washington, D. C., May 22, 1952.

HON. TOM MURRAY,
*Chairman, Committee on Post Office and Civil Service,
House of Representatives.*

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Reference is made to your request for an early report on H. R. 7871, a bill entitled "To authorize the Postmaster General to grant permission for the use in first- and second-class post offices of special canceling stamps or postmarking dies in order to encourage voting in general elections."

It is believed that each eligible citizen should be urged to exercise his right to vote. However, this Department is of the opinion that in some areas of public opinion there would be objection to use of the facilities of the Post Office Department for such a purpose since it would be felt that the suggested activity on the part of the Post Office Department would be in the nature of a partisan act.

Considering all aspects of the situation, including the primary fact that the Post Office Department was established for the transmission of mail matter and not as an instrument for influencing public action, it is not believed that its facilities should be used for the purposes contemplated by this measure.

In view of the foregoing, this Department does not recommend the enactment of this bill.

The Bureau of the Budget has advised that there would be no objection to the presentation of this report to your Committee.

Sincerely yours,

J. M. DONALDSON, *Postmaster General.*

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT,
BUREAU OF THE BUDGET,
Washington, D. C., June 18, 1952.

Hon. TOM MURRAY,
*Chairman, Committee on Post Office and Civil Service,
House of Representatives, 213-215 Old House Office Building,
Washington, D. C.*

MY DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: This will acknowledge your letter of May 16, 1952, inviting the Bureau of the Budget to comment on H. R. 7871, to authorize the Postmaster General to grant permission for the use in first- and second-class post offices of special canceling stamps or postmarking dies in order to encourage voting in general elections.

It appears to this office that the Postmaster General has sufficient authority, under the provisions of the act of May 11, 1902 (39 U. S. C 368), to grant permission for the use, as contemplated under H. R. 7871, of such special canceling stamps or postmarking dies provided at the expense of the permittee.

Sincerely yours,

ELMER B. STAATS, *Acting Director.*

CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW

In compliance with paragraph 2a of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, changes in existing law made by the bill, as introduced, are shown as follows (existing law proposed to be omitted is enclosed in black brackets, new matter is printed in italics, existing law in which no change is proposed is shown in roman):

SECTION 1 OF THE ACT OF MAY 11, 1922 (39 U. S. C., SEC. 368)

That the Postmaster General be, and he is hereby, authorized, under such rules and regulations as he may prescribe, to grant permission for the use in first and second class post offices of special canceling stamps or postmarking dies for advertising purposes in the following cases only: First, where the event to be advertised is for some national purpose for which Congress has made an appropriation; second, where the event to be advertised is of general public interest and importance and is to endure for a definite period of time and is not to be conducted for private gain or **[profit]** *profit*; *Third, where the purpose is to urge citizens to register and to vote in general elections: Provided, That such permit shall not be for a longer period than six months and the duration of the event to be advertised: Provided further, That nothing in this Act shall be construed to authorize the expenditure of any postal funds or appropriation either for the purchase of special canceling stamps or postmarking dies or for adapting canceling machines for the use of such stamps or dies or for installing the same, but all expense shall be prepaid by the permittee.*



